

Ear Wax



A Guide For At Home Treatment

Ear Syringing

We are no longer providing Ear Syringing at the Surgery.

We are dedicated to providing the best, most appropriate services within our Primary Care Network, however, ear syringing is not considered to be the first line of treatment for the clearing of earwax. In fact, there's many simple, easy ways to treat the build-up of ear wax at home.

The clearing of earwax is not a funded service in General Practice within the NHS, so along with many other surgeries across the country, we have withdrawn this service. This booklet provides helpful information, guidance and advice on treatments available at home.

What is ear wax?

Ear wax is produced by the ear canal. It is a build-up of cells formed into a waxy oil called cerumen (earwax).

This wax protects the ear canal from foreign particles, dust and irritation from liquids such as water. Ear wax is continuously being made and eventually works its way up the ear canal and usually falls out on its own. Sometimes it does not fall out on its own and creates a build-up.

A build-up of earwax can lead to temporary hearing loss, so it is important that the earwax is cleared.

We do not recommended using cotton buds to clear away ear wax, as this can push the earwax further into the ear canal, creating greater blockage and further problems such as an infection.

Symptoms of an ear wax build-up

- Temporary sudden or partial hearing loss
- Earache
- Buzzing or ringing in the ear (Tinnitus)

It is important to remove the ear wax that has built up in the ear or this may lead to infection.

Symptoms of an ear infection:

- Persistent hearing loss
- Odour coming from your ear
- Severe pain, or pain that won't go away
- Fever
- Dizziness
- Itchiness

If your symptoms do not improve or you are experiencing any symptoms of an ear infection, contact your nurse and seek help from a professional. They may perform some hearing tests, suggest medication or refer you to the ENT (ear, nose and throat) department of your local hospital for further treatment.

What can you do to prevent this ear wax build-up?

Well, you simply can't prevent ear wax. Though, the recommended treatment is to use 2 to 3 drops of olive or almond oil in your ear twice a day, for a few days. If you are experiencing a continuous blockage in your ear due to ear wax, using olive oil twice a week should help clear the blockage.

At home treatments- what should you do?

- Firstly, you can speak to a pharmacist who can recommend the best treatment for you
- If ear wax build up is persistent and affects your day to day life, you may want to use eardrops
- When bathing, keep your head above water level to prevent any water entering your ear
- Try to keep your ears dry when doing activities in or around water, such as swimming. You can do this by applying Vaseline around your inner ear.

How to use eardrops:

1. Make sure you use the ear drops at room temperature
2. Lie down with affected ear upward
3. Put the correct amount of eardrops into the infected ear
4. After applying the drops, lie with affected ear upwards for 5-10 minutes so the eardrops can soak and soften the earwax.

What should you not do?

- Do not use anything smaller than your elbow in your ear. Such as cotton buds or anything sharp, as this can push the ear wax further into the ear canal. This can lead to infections and trauma of the ear.
- Do not use drops if you have a hole in your eardrum (a perforated eardrum).
- We do not recommend using ear candles. The wax from the candle may drip into your ear, or you can burn your skin with the flame.

Bulb Syringe- at home kit

At pharmacies, you can now get over-the-counter kits to help you treat ear wax build-ups at home. This kit will contain a wax softener and a bulb syringe to wash away the soft wax. This is for use when one or both ears are blocked with earwax. These are safe, good to use and are cheap to purchase in local pharmacies. Please ask the Pharmacist for advice if you purchase a kit for the first time or are unsure how to use one.

Please make sure you follow instructions provided on the kit.

For further information about treating ear wax build-ups you can visit the following NHS website link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/earwax-build-up/>

Or check your symptoms on the NHS App, available now to download on IOS and Android.

